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NIGHT JUSTICE

NIGHT IN NORTHERN AQUILONIA, NEAR THE GUNDERLAND BORDER.

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL STORY IDEA BY ALAN ZELENETZ AND MARC SILVESTRI

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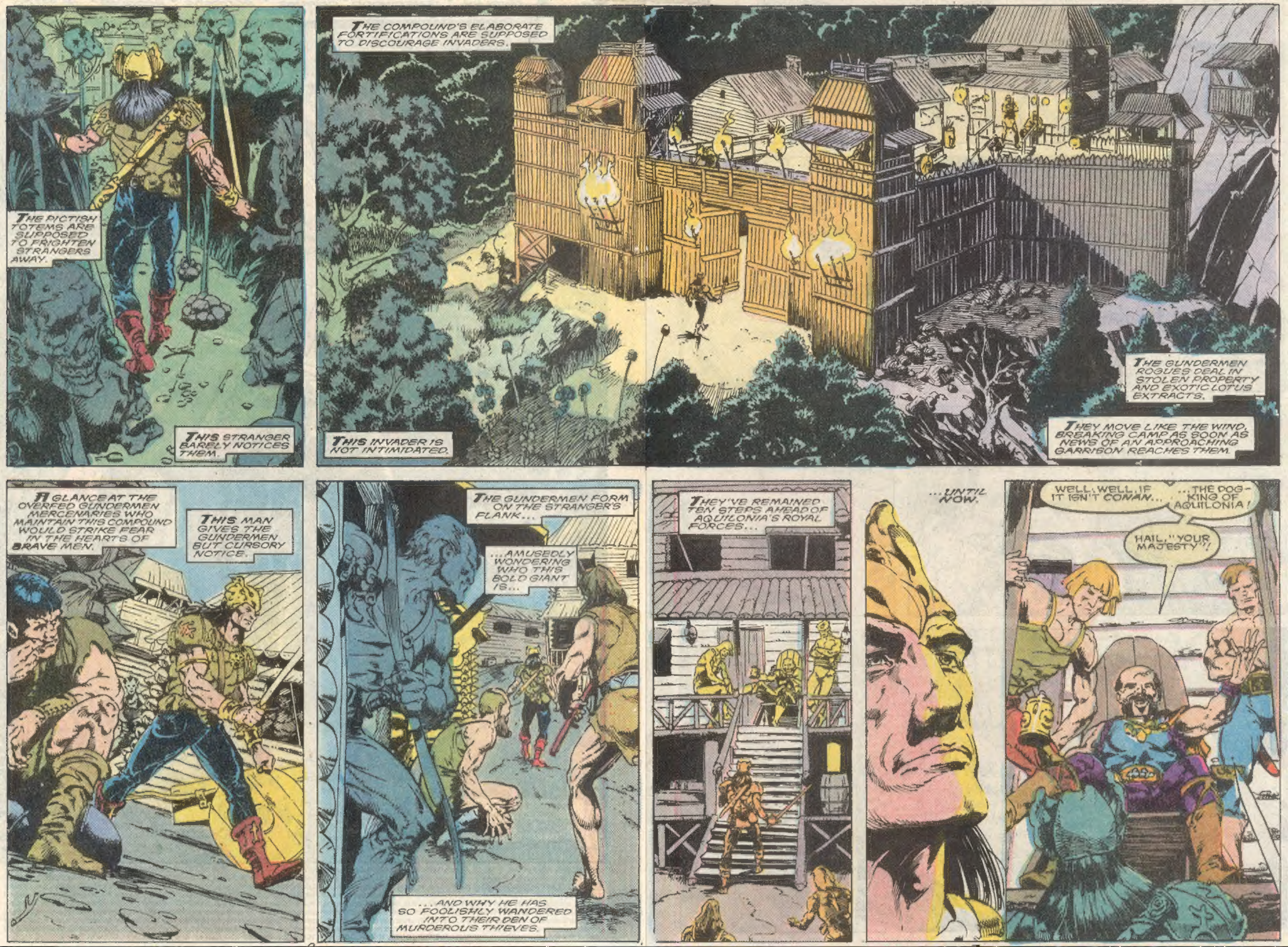
THE PICTISH TOTEMS ARE SUPPOSED TO FRIGHTEN STRANGERS AWAY.
THIS STRANGER BARELY NOTICES THEM.
THE COMPOUND'S ELABORATE FORTIFICATIONS ARE SUPPOSED TO DISCOURAGE INVADERS.
THIS INVADER IS NOT INTIMIDATED.
THE GUNDERMEN ROGUES DEAL IN STOLEN PROPERTY AND EXOTIC LOTUS EXTRACTS.
THEY MOVE LIKE THE WIND, BREAKING CAMP AS SOON AS NEWS OF AN APPROACHING GARRISON REACHES THEM.
A GLANCE AT THE OVERFED GUNDERMEN MERCENARIES WHO MAINTAIN THIS COMPOUND WOULD STRIKE FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF BRAVE MEN.
THIS MAN GIVES THE GUNDERMEN BUT CURSORY NOTICE.
THE GUNDERMEN FORM ON THE STRANGER'S FLANK...
...AMUSEDLY WONDERING WHO THIS BOLD GIANT IS...
...AND WHY HE HAS SO FOOLISHLY WANDERED INTO THEIR DEN OF MURDEROUS THIEVES.
THEY'VE REMAINED TEN STEPS AHEAD OF AQUILONIA'S ROYAL FORCES...
...UNTIL NOW.
WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T CONAN... ...THE DOG-KING OF AQUILONIA!
HAIL, "YOUR MAJESTY"!

YOU HAVE THE COUNT OF *TWO* HEARTBEATS TO GET OFF MY LAND.

DID YOU HEAR *THAT*?!

HO! OUR KING HAS GONE *MAD*! *ALONE* HE SEEKS TO DISMISS US, EH?

ONE.

SEE HERE, BARBARIAN. MAYBE YOU ARE LORD OF THIS LAND, BUT WITHOUT YOUR ARMIES YOU ARE *NOTHING*!

HERE I RULE! HERE MY WORD IS LAW!

TWO.

GHAAA--!!

TIME'S UP.

YOU'RE *MAD!* TOTALLY INSANE!

MY MEN WILL *KILL* YOU! THEY'LL--!

THEY'LL *BLEED.*

GHHAAA--!

KILL HIM!

HE'S ONLY *ONE MAN!*

NOW, MY LORD...?

NAY, TARQUIN. WAIT A MOMENT.

ALL RIGHT.

NOW.

SUDDENLY, FOUR OF THE CAMP'S SHEDS BURST INTO FLAME...

...JEOPARDIZING THE GUNDERMEN'S CONTRABAND STOCK.

AND, IN EACH DOORWAY...

...ONE OF THE BLACK DRAGONS!

SYAN-LIN.

KEPCHOE.

HROLF.

TARQUIN.

THE BLACK DRAGONS!

NOT THAT HE ACTUALLY NEEDS THEM.

THE CIMMERIAN IS CAPABLE OF DEALING DEATH PERSONALLY.

BY JHIL, CONAN'S BROUGHT HIS DEMONS WITH HIM!!

MY LORD, THE ROGUE LEADER IS ESCAPING!

NO HE'S NOT.

FINISH UP HERE, DRAGONS.

I'VE AN *ERRAND* TO RUN!

SOON...

HE'S BEEN RUNNING FOR A LONG TIME.

HE'S LEFT THE MAD BARBARIAN AND HIS NIGHTMARISH COHORTS FAR BEHIND.

HE PLOWS RIGHT THROUGH THE THICKET. HE BELIEVES IT WILL COVER HIS TRAIL.

THE THORNS PRICK AND SCRAPE HIS SKIN, BUT HE SMILES THROUGH THE PAIN, WAXING CONFIDENCE...

...THAT HE'S LEFT CONAN FAR BEHIND HIM.

HERE'S A LESSON FOR YOU, NOD.

EVIL SWINGS FULL CIRCLE.

SOONER OR LATER, YOUR SINS WILL CATCH UP TO YOU.

YOU... YOU... I'LL KILL YOU--

NO YOU WON'T.

'TIS TIME FOR A RECKONING, NOD.

HERE ARE YOUR CONSEQUENCES!

CHUDD

THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOLDS A CELEBRATION TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO THEIR KING.

THE GUNDERMEN ROGUES HAVE VICTIMIZED THIS VILLAGE FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

IN HIS TWENTY YEARS ON THE THRONE, CONAN HAS *NEVER* GOTTEN USED TO THESE THINGS.

THUS, IT IS A VERY LONG SPEECH.

FINALLY...

EXPRESS MY THANKS TO YOUR PEOPLE, PREFECT.

I'VE GOT TO LEAVE BEFORE ANOTHER SPEECH STARTS.

A THOUSAND PARDONS, GOOD LORD.

I COME BEARING A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE ALUVIAN BARONY!

IT IS A PETITION FROM ALUVIA'S ACTING BARON, TIMON FLAVIUS, REQUESTING THE RELEASE OF THEIR LORD...

...BARON AEMILIUS!

AEMILIUS...?

HMMM... I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIM...

BARON AEMILIUS HAS SPENT THE LAST FIVE SEASONS IN A TARANTIAN DUNGEON.

THANK YOU FOR THE *FRUIT*, GIRL.

THAT, AND THE *COMPASSION*.

HOW UNLIKE YOUR FATHER THE KING.

SO LONG AGO, CONAN HAD ME ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF COMPLICITY IN THE DEATH OF YOUR BROTHER, PRINCE CONN. AND, LO, THESE MANY SEASONS HAVE I BEEN LEFT TO LANGUISH HEREIN.*

NAY, LORD AEMILIUS, MY FATHER HAS NOT FORGOTTEN YOU... FAR FROM IT!

HE'S FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME, *RADEGUND*.

HE NEEDS ONLY TO BE SURE IN HIS OWN MIND THAT YOU ARE INDEED INNOCENT!

*SEE CONAN THE KING #28 FOR DETAILS.--PAT

THE KING IS A FAIR AND NOBLE MAN!

CONAN IS A SWORD-SWINGING TYRANT WHO'D RATHER SAVE FACE THAN METE OUT PROPER JUDGMENT.

METHINKS I DO LOATHE HIM MOST OF ALL BECAUSE IN HIM I SEE A REFLECTION OF *MYSELF*.

HE'LL *NEVER* FREE ME, CHILD. I'LL NOT SEE MY HOMELAND AGAIN.

BUT, LORD AEMILIUS, I'VE HEARD NEWS OF A PETITION BEING CIRCULATED BY YOUR COUSIN, *TIMON FLAVIUS*, BEGGING THE KING FOR YOUR RELEASE.

PETITION?

DID YOU SAY... *PETITION?!*

HA! SUCH A SWEET AND NAIVE CHILD! WOULD THAT YOU WERE MY VERY OWN DAUGHTER!

YOUR REGULAR VISITATIONS PROVIDE THE SINGLE VESTIGE OF HUMANITY I'VE ENCOUNTERED HERE IN TARANTIA!

GO IN PEACE, CHILD.

"PETITION"! *HA!*

SOON, UPSTAIRS..

YOU GUARDS MAY RETURN TO YOUR POSTS NOW!

SEE YOU NEXT TIME, PRINCESS!

THAT SOUND... A CLAMOR IN THE HALL ABOVE!

FATHER!

FATHER MUST HAVE RETURNED!

PRAWLLL!!

GREETINGS, TAURUS!

WHAT? HOW DID YOU KNOW THE DRAGON WAS MY ILLUSION...?!

SIMPLE, MY BROTHER. I COULD SMELL YOU FROM YARDS OFF!

FUNNY

WHAT'S YOUR PANIC?

FATHER'S HOME! FATHER'S HOME!

FATHER'S HOME FATHER'S HOME

WHO CARES?!

I DO!

FATHER!

...DOVES ...WITH THE LIONS

...BUT BARON MALORIC, ...ATE THE LIONS

...MALORIC''

...THE COUNCIL OF BARONS!

...HAS ANY ...THREATENING ...SECESSION?

...MAN ...WITH A WHO NEEDS ...

...MOST EXCELLENT LIEGE.

...FATHER...

...SECESSION...

NIGHT

...WITCH ...

...SLEEPING IN THE NEXT ROOM, PROSPERO.

...THANK YOU FOR COMING ... QUICKLY.

...MY MENTAL ...IN ...WHAT ... ...AY IN THIS ...

...THE KINGDOM ENTIRE MAY RUPTURE FROM THE NEWS!

A FORTNIGHT GONE, I WAS PATROLLING THE GROUNDS WHEN I FOUND THEM * AT FIRST I THOUGHT THE BOY TO BE DELIRIOUS OR INSANE

I'VE SPENT THESE DAYS CHECKING INTO HIS STORY. I AM CONVINCED OF ITS AUTHENTICITY.

THUS THE KING MUST NOW BE TOLD

*LASTISH -PAT

SYAN-LIN, HERE HAS ACTED AS INTERPRETER.

NEARLY EIGHTEEN SUMMERS AGO, OUR LORD JOURNEYED TO KHITAI TO RESCUE HIS STOLEN QUEEN * ALONG THE WAY, HE ENCOUNTERED A SLAVE GIRL.

THE SLAVE GIRL PROVED INVALUABLE TO THE KING'S MISSION. QUIRQUIENTENOHIA WAS INDEED RESCUED AND ALL WAS WELL.

*SEE KING CONAN #6. --PAT

THERE IS NOW, HOWEVER, A CERTAIN COMPLICATION

THE SLAVE GIRL'S NAME IS KANG LOU DZE

THIS WOMAN

SHE AND OUR LORD HAD BECOME INTIMATE IN DUE SEASON, SHE BORE HIM A SON

THE BOY IS PRINCE CONN'S VERITABLE *TWIN* HE IS IN THE NEXT ROOM.

MOREOVER HE SWEARS TO HAVE SEEN THE *TRUE* PRINCE *ALIVE* IN KHITAI!

TARQUIN

...THIS IS INDEED A LAME EXCUSE FOR A PRACTICAL JOKE.

YOU'LL HAVE TO TRY HARDER THAN THIS!

THIS IS NO JEST, PROSPERO. NEWS OF THE KING'S INFIDELITY WILL *ROCK* THIS KINGDOM!

BAH! CONN'S "TWIN" AND CONN *ALIVE* AND IN THE FAR EAST?

WHAT'S *REALLY* IN HERE TARQUIN? A WATER BUCKET TO DRENCH ME WHEN I OPEN THE DOOR?

HE'S *GONE*!

A *MOST* LAME JEST, CAPTAIN

AT THAT MOMENT, A KHITAN PEASANT BOY WANDERS THE CASTLE GROUNDS

AS A CHILD HE'D HEARD FABLES OF WEALTH SUCH AS THIS, STILL HE'D NEVER DREAMED THE FABLES WERE ACTUALLY TRUE.

HIS NAME IS KANG SNO. HE IS CONAN'S ILLEGITIMATE SON

HE SPEAKS ONLY KHITAN, WITH A SPATTERING OF OTHER MONGREL LANGUAGES

WHAT THEN, LYSANDER--?

DID YOU SNEEZE AND MISS THE TARGET OR DID YOU FORFEIT THE COMPETITION?

NEITHER, QUEEN ZENOBIA!

I SLUGGED THE JUDGE AND STOLE THE TROPHY!

HE CAN FATHOM NEITHER THEIR WORDS NOR THEIR IDENTITIES

THERE YOU ARE!

C--CONAN--!

ONE SIDE, WIFE! 'TIS YOUR BODYGUARD I'VE COME FOR!

M-ME?!?

AYE! I CAN'T FIND PROSPERO, AND BY CROM, I NEED A DRINKING BROTHER TONIGHT! YOU'RE ELECTED, LYSANDER!

COME, LET'S QUAFF THE LOCAL TAVERN DRY!

HE'S SEEN HIS FATHER FOR THE FIRST TIME.

TERROR SWEEPS OVER HIM AS HE WATCHES THE MIGHTY-THEWED CIMMERIAN SAUNTER OFF!

PRESENTLY

G'NIGHT, LADY QUEEN!

THANK YOU, JAKELL!

MOTHER!!

RADEGUND! WHY ARE YOU ABOUT AT THIS HOUR?

I'M LOOKING FOR FATHER

HE'S NOT SAID A WORD TO ME SINCE HIS RETURN AND I'D REALLY LIKE TO SEE HIM!

POOR CHILD! YOUR FATHER IS OUT CAROUSING IN TAVERNS WITH LYSANDER! I FEAR WE'LL NOT SEE EITHER OF THEM 'TIL DAYLIGHT

YOUR FATHER IS NOT AN EASY MAN TO LOVE RADEGUND

NOTHING WORTH HAVING COMES EASILY, DOES IT, MOTHER?

SOON RADEGUND RETURNS TO HER BEDCHAMBER

COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF THE CAUSE OF HER NIGHT VISITOR,

SHE IS SPLENDID AWAKE!

KANG SHE HAS NEVER SEEN SUCH BEAUTY

HE KNOWS NOT WHETHER SHE BE SERVANT OR ROYALTY

NEITHER DOES HE CARE.

WHAT?

CONN--?!

OOOHH--!

SOON RADEGUND RETURNS TO HER BEDCHAMBER

SOON

I STILL THINK THIS IS SOME BAD JEST

OH MORTAL ME... THE KINGDOM WILL ROCK SHOULD THE PLOT BE DISCOVERED!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

WE CANNOT ALERT THE CASTLE FOLKS WITH IT DIVULGING OUR SECRETS

LOOKS LIKE OUR PROBLEM IS SOLVED.

THE WANDERING YOUTH RETURNS!

YOU'RE RIGHT, TALADIN

OUR PROBLEM *WAS* HEAVEN SENT.

WE'RE ALL ABOUT TO LOSE OUR JOBS

MUCH LATER...

SO, THIS AEMILIUS BUSINESS HAS ME AT ODDS, LYSANDER

I PERSONALLY DON'T CARE IF HE STAYS IMPRISONED OR GOES FREE! BUT, I'M A *KING*, EVEN WITH THIS FALSE BEARD

THE THRICE-CURSED *POLITICS* MUST BE PLAYED OUT.

IF I ACCEDE TO FLAVIUS'S DEMAND AND RELEASE AEMILIUS, IT WILL MAKE ME LOOK WEAK

IF I *NEGOTIATE*, IT WILL MAKE ME LOOK WEAK.

IF I REFUSE AND ALUVIA SECEDES, I'LL BE FORCED TO SEND IN A GARRISON AND SPILL AQUILONIAN BLOOD

THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF THIS MESS

HAVE *YOU* ANY SUGGESTIONS, SOLDIER?

BLAME IT ALL ON MALORIC AND *HANG* HIM.

I'LL CONSIDER IT.

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

OUTSIDE...

WHAT IN MITRA'S NAME...?

ALL RIGHT...

JUST HOW BAD *IS* IT?

KANG SHO HAD BEEN SPOTTED BY A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY THE SECRET IS OUT.

CONAN HAS TO BE TOLD

PROSPERO THOUGHT IT BEST TO BREAK THE NEWS WHILE CONAN WAS HAVING A GOOD TIME.

CONAN'S TRYST WITH KANG LOU-DZE IS AN EPISODE HE'D LONG-SINCE FORGOTTEN

NOW HE MUST TELL H'S QUEEN BEFORE SOMEONE ELSE DOES.

HE IS CIMMERIAN

SUBTLETY IS COMPLETELY UNKNOWN TO HIM

ZENOBIA WISHES HE O WAITED UNTIL MORNING.

SO, CONAN. .

THIS IS HOW IT ENDS, EH?

A BASTARD SON SHOWS UP..

SWEARING YOUR *TRUE* HEIR IS ALIVE AND WELL SO, THERE'S BEEN *NO CRIME* COMMITTED.

. THUS YOU'VE A CONVENIENT POLITICAL LOOPHOLE THROUGH WHICH I MAY NOW STROLL TO FREEDOM

HOW NICE.

YOU MEN ARE DISMISSED.

AS AM *I*, EH, DOG-KING?

AS ARE YOUR POLITICAL WOES WITH MY BARONY?

'TIS NOT THAT SIMPLE, BARBARIAN

YOU WRONGLY ACCUSED AND IMPRISONED ME! I'LL SEE YOU PAY FOR THAT!

THAT IS, OF COURSE, IF YOU'RE MAN ENOUGH TO DROP YOUR SWORD AND *FACE* ME!

LET'S SETTLE THINGS ONCE AND FOR *ALL*!

COME ON

WITH PLEASURE, DOG-KING OF AQUILONIA!

YOU'RE LONG OVERDUE FOR A LESSON, CIMMERIAN!

EVIL COMES BACK ON YOU!

WHOSE EVIL, AEMILIUS?

YOURS, DOG-KING!

THIS DAY YOUR KING COME TO CALL!

HOW DOES IT *FEEL*, CONAN ? YOUR HISTRIONIC MOURNING OVER YOUR DEAD WHELP HAVING BEEN FINALLY BROUGHT TO AN END -

--BY A REVELATION THAT HAS TORN YOUR FAMILY ASUNDER!

AND IN THE SAME BARGAIN, YOU'VE REALIZED THAT YOU'VE KEPT ME WRONGLY IMPRISONED..

THAT YOU'VE VIOLATED YOUR OWN INBRED SENSE OF *HONOR*!

I'M *GLAD* YOUR LIFE'S COMING UNRAVELED, DOG!

ANYTHING I CAN DO TO SPEED THE PROCESS IS JUST--

ENOUGH, JACKAL!

MY PERSONAL AFFAIRS?!!?!

MY *HONOR*?!

...WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU KNOW *ANYTHING* ABOUT ME?!

I DID WHAT I *DID*.

I'VE MADE MY OWN CHOICES.

I'LL LIVE WITH THEM

AND *YOU*, AEMILIUS

WHAAM!

ARE SIMPLY *PATHETIC*!

IT'S FINISHED

I'M GOING TO GO DOWN A FLAGON OF ALE

WHY NOT JOIN ME?

ONLY IN *ARALU*, CONAN

I'LL BUY YOU A DRINK *THERE*.

COME NOW, AEMILIUS. DON'T EVEN *THINK* OF USING THAT.

OH, BUT THAT'S THE *BEAUTY* OF THINGS, CONAN.

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF USING THIS SWORD ON YOU.

CROM. .

THIS SWORD IS FOR ME ALONE

MY FINAL REVENGE, CONAN

NO ONE WILL EVER BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T KILL ME IN A FIT OF RAGE!

M-MY BARONY.. WILL REVOLT... THE ALLIED PROVINCES WILL JOIN IN

HEH. . HEH. .

...HERE ARE YOUR... CONSEQUENCES.

MORAVIA

THE QUEEN IS RESTING, MAJESTY.

FIRST FATHER, NOW MOTHER...

THIS JUST GETS WORSE

WHARRL-!

LOOK TAHKO, I HAVEN'T TIME FOR YOUR SILLY GAMES

GO BOTHER SOMEONE ELSE

AT THAT MOMENT

SO, YOU'RE MY BROTHER, EH?

AND YOU LOOK JUST LIKE CONN

AND YOU ONLY SPEAK KHITAN

YES, KANG-

...YOU'VE LOST DEFINITE POSSIBILITIES.

THIS BEING COMES FROM A NAMELESS VOID FAR BEYOND THIS WORLD PLANE.

IT IS ON A MISSION OF MURDER..

EMPEROR STRABONUS'S PALACE AT KHORSHEMISH.

DAWN

DAWN! DAWN!!

MITRA, ISHTAR, AND A DOZEN DEVILS!

WHY IS IT THE LORD OF THE YAGYU CLAN MUST ALWAYS ARRIVE EARLY FOR AN AUDIENCE WITH ME?!

PERMITS! HE SEEKS PERMITS TO CROSS MY LANDS!

HE DOESN'T NEED ANY BLASTED PERMITS! HE KNOWS NO SANE MONARCH WOULD LIFT A HAND AGAINST HIM!

GENJIS IS A FOOL!

BEGGING MY LORD'S PARDON--

--IT IS NOT MY HUSBAND'S WAY TO INTRUDE UPON SOVEREIGN LANDS

ANNEKA, YOUR HUSBAND'S HUMILITY SERVES ONLY A DIPLOMATIC PURPOSE.

IS THAT NOT TRUE, GENJIS?

I HAVE NAUGHT BUT RESPECT FOR THE MIGHTY MONARCH OF KOTH

YES, YES.

TELL ME, GENJIS WHAT MISSION DO YOU RACE TO NOW?

I TRAVEL TO AQUILONIA.

PRESSING BUSINESS WITH CONAN, EH, GENJIS?

IF IT PLEASES YOUR HIGHNESS..

PLEASE REFER TO ME BY MY MORE PROPER SOBRIQUET PLEASE CALL ME...

...KOBE.

NEXT ISSUE: THE

PACT!

. . . And lo, there came a time when the Kingdoms of the East did tremble beneath the thundering of the great hordes of Genjis, the Yagyu Clan. Like a plague of locusts they swept ever southwards, leaving only misery and death in their wake.

Thither came CONAN II, Crown Prince of Aquilonia. Estranged from his father and kingdom, he did settle for a time in Khitai. Thus did he ally himself with the fractious, tattered, rebel underground which sought to thwart the evil Genjis.

Stripped of the power of his birthright, he became a stranger in a strange land.

CONN, SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING

By A.S. Blaustein & Dale Eaglesham.

Inks — Del Barras
Letters — Rick Parker
Colors — A.A. Perry

IT MIGHT AS WELL BE A THOUSAND WORLDS AWAY--

KHITAI.

AN ANCIENT EASTERN LAND OF RUTHLESS WARLORDS ..

. AND THE FEW BUT NOBLE MEN WHO GATHER TOGETHER LIKE THE STONES OF A PRIMITIVE DAM TO STAND AGAINST THE EVER-RISING POWER OF THE HORDE

IT IS HERE ON THIS MOUNTAIN TOP THAT WE ARE WITNESS TO SUCH A CLASH TODAY, THE REBELS DO WELL AGAINST THE WARRIORS OF THE HORDE!

-- BUT AS THE HARD AND BITTER RAIN OF THE TYPHOON BEATS DOWN UPON THE MOUNTAIN --

-- A NEW FOE ENTERS THE BATTLE!

MITRA!

A FOE SENT BY THE MOUNTAIN GODS THEMSELVES!

ONE OF THE REBELS IS SENT CAREENING DOWN THE SLOPES OF THE MOUNTAIN. HIS HORSE TWISTS PAINFULLY WITH THE FORCE OF THE EARTHY TORRENT.

THE YOUNG REBEL CAPTAIN A MERE BOY LOOKS ON IN HELPLESS HORROR AT THE SENSELESS DEATH OF HIS BARBARIAN FRIEND.

HE SOFTLY UTTERS HIS FRIEND'S NAME...

CONN.

THE YOUNG CAPTAIN'S NAME IS CHENSU.

HE IS THE LEADER OF A SMALL BAND OF REBELS WHO HAVE UNEXPECTEDLY RUN AMBUSH ON A HORDE CARAVAN!

HE IS HORRIBLY OUTNUMBERED

LORD KAO SMILES BROADLY HE WAS WISE TO SELL HIS SMALL KINGDOM TO THE HORDE, AND HIS SUBJECTS TO BONDAGE! THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN ANYWAY, BY FORCE.

AND THE PAYMENT WHICH IS SMALL FOR A KINGDOM, IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO KEEP HIM IN LUXURIOUS DECADENCE FOREVER!

QUICKLY, MEN! WE MUST *FIGHT* OUR WAY *OUT!* WE CANNOT WIN, BUT MAYHAP WE CAN *ESCAPE!*

OUR CAPTAIN IS A BRAVE YOUNG MAN! HE IS VERY MUCH LIKE HIS *FATHER!*

HIS *DEAD* FATHER. I FEAR THE SAME FATE AWAITS *US!*

NO WORDS ARE SPOKEN IN BATTLE. THE SOUND OF CLANGING STEEL AND RENT FLESH IS THE ONLY CONVERSATION.

ENOUGH!

A WARRIOR ENTERS

HE IS CONN!

SON OF CONAN!

SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING!

MITRA!

THOUGH RAISED A PRINCE IN CIVILIZED AQUILONIA, HIS BARBARIAN HEART PUMPS THE SAVAGE BLOOD OF CIMMERIA THROUGH HIS VEINS!

SKRUK!

HAVE AT THEE, IMPERIAL LACKEY!

I WOULD SPEAK WITH YOUR OBESE COMPANION!

YOU ARE KAO?

YES.

THEN YOU ARE MINE, FAT MAN.

I HAVE MET MANY KINGS WHO SET THEMSELVES ABOVE THE LAWS OF MEN!

MY FATHER IS SUCH A KING --

I HATE MY FATHER!

ARRGH!

A PUZZLED WARRIOR OF THE HORDE WATCHES IN DUMB AMAZEMENT. HE HAS NEVER SEEN AS RECKLESS A FOOL AS THIS STRANGE YOUNG BARBARIAN. HE WONDERS HOW HE HAS MANAGED TO LIVE SO LONG

AND SO..

HA! THAT CURSED WESTERN DOG MUST HAVE FALLEN TO HIS DEATH!

BUT THE GODS SHINE ON KAO. I AM ALIVE! I STILL HAVE MY JEWELS! HA-HA-HA-HA!

..EH?

SPARE MY MISERABLE LIFE, PLEEEEEASE! I BEG OF YOU! I CAN OFFER YOU MUCH WEALTH!

SPIT

SKRAAK

I CARE NOT FOR EITHER

LATER, AT THE REBEL ENCAMPMENT...

GREETINGS.. CAPTAIN!

CONN! MY FRIEND! YOU ARE ALIVE! I AM SO VERY GLAD!

LORD TSINJE KNEW YOU WOULD BE BACK! HE AWAITS YOU IN HIS TENT. I'M SORRY, BUT IT WAS MY DUTY TO INFORM HIM OF YOUR BRASH BEHAVIOR.

YOU DID NOT FOLLOW ORDERS. HE IS NOT HAPPY.

NEITHER AM I!

AND...

TSINJE-NUSHAN! THIS HUMBLE SOLDIER RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS AUDIENCE WITH HIS LORD!

SPEAK FREELY, CONN. YOUR BUTCHERY OF THE FINER POINTS OF OUR LANGUAGE HURTS MY EARS.

WHY IN MITRA'S NAME MUST I CONTINUE TO TAKE ORDERS FROM A YOUNG WHELP LIKE CHENSU?!

WE BOTH KNOW THAT I AM THE BETTER WARRIOR!

I DEMAND TO BE MADE CAPTAIN!

SO..

BAP!

YOUR INSOLENCE IS ONE REASON!

YOUR BLATANT DISREGARD FOR STANDING ORDERS IS ANOTHER!

THE JEWELS BELONGING TO LORD KAO WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY USEFUL TO OUR CAUSE.

THE REBELLION IS NOT FUNDED BY PASSION. IT IS MONEY WHICH BUYS OUR PROVISIONS CHENSU IS FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY. YOU BRING ME NOTHING BUT STOMACH TROUBLES!

GO!

CONN! SADDLE-UP A NEW HORSE. WE MUST MAKE A SWEEP OF THE NORTHERN FOREST BEFORE WE RETIRE TONIGHT.

=GRUNT=

THE MOON RISES HIGH OVER THE NORTHERN FOREST, AS CONN AND CHENSU CASUALLY SCAN FOR ANY SIGNS OF THE HORDE

IT IS BORING, TEDIOUS WORK, MADE TOLERABLE BY THE TELLING OF TALES

--BUT THE WAY TO THE ANCIENT PORTAL WAS GUARDED BY A CREATURE MOST FOUL! A HIDEOUSLY LARGE SPIDER, AS LARGE AS TWO OXEN, HAD FALLEN FROM THE RAFTERS--

--AND NOW WAS UPON ME!

THOUGH IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE STRAIN, I MANAGED TO LOOSEN MY BROADSWORD AND SWINGING IT UPWARDS IN A MIGHTY ARC, I SLASHED THE BEAST'S SOFT UNDERBELLY.

THE STENCH WAS HORRIFIC, AS, COVERED IN THE CREATURE'S DANK, VISCOUS BLOOD, I MADE MY WAY TO THE ANCIENT DOOR.

GODS! YOU MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIFIED! DID YOU ENTER?

HOLD STILL, LAD I'M GETTING TO THAT!

AS I OPENED THE DOOR I WAS STRUCK BY THE SIGHT OF THE MOST SPLENDID, AND PITIFUL THING EVER SEEN!

IT WAS SEATED UPON A HUGE THRONE ITS BODY WAS THAT OF A WITHERED OLD MAN AND ITS HEAD LIKE THAT OF AN *ELEPHANT!*

BEFORE IT LAY THE LARGEST GEMSTONE I HAVE EVER SEEN! THE CREATURE BECKONED ME TO KILL IT SO WHETHER WAS ITS LIFE

WHAT DID YOU DO?

I HAD NO CHOICE I *KILLED* THE PITIFUL CREATURE THEN SOMETHING *MIRACULOUS* OCCURRED THE GEMSTONE SOAKED UP THE BLOOD OF THE CREATURE, CREATING A GREAT AND POWERFUL MAGIC!

IT WAS *THAT* MAGIC WHICH I USED TO DESTROY THE *EVIL WIZARD* ONCE AND FOR ALL!

THAT IS THE MOST *UNBELIEVABLE* STORY I HAVE EVER HEARD! BUT WELL TOLD!

MY FATHER WAS A GREAT WARRIOR WHO TOLD ME MANY SUCH TALES OF ADVENTURE BEFORE HE DIED! *YOUR* FATHER MUST BE VERY PROUD OF YOU

--MY FATHER--

THUD

EH?

CONNNN

CONN STARES IN HORROR AT THE GHASTLY SIGHT OF HIS YOUNG COMPANION

CHENSHU!

COME BACK HERE, YOU BLASTED HORDE COWARDS!

YABU! TACHI! FOLLOW ME!

FOR CHENSU!

FOR REVENGE!

WHAT OF LORD TSINJE'S ORDERS?

WE WERE TOLD NOT TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY.

BLAST LORD TSINJE'S ORDERS!

ARE YOU COLD-BLOODED DEVILS OR MEN?!

I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION. SHOULD WE FOLLOW HIM?

PROBABLY NOT

I WILL BET YOU TWENTY SILVER WE SHALL REGRET THIS!

BREATHE YOUR LAST BREATHS, YOU *KHITAI DEVILS!* I HAVE COME TO SEND YOU TO YOUR DEMON GODS!

JOHN QUICKLY DISPATCHES HIS FOES AND WHIRLS AROUND TO SEE...

YABU! TACHI! I KNEW YOU WERE MEN OF *HONOR!* NOW QUICKLY, BEFORE...

TOO LATE

IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN SIX HORDE DEVILS TO TAKE US! RIGHT MEN?!

MAKE THAT FIVE!

HAH! MAKE THAT FOUR!

I THINK WE HAD BEST STOP COUNTING.

IT IS THAT SAME NIGHT.

THE MOON SHINES CRUELLY ON A LONE ARMORED FIGURE AS IT SPLASHES THROUGH THE RICE PADDIES.

THE FIGURE IS A YOUNG MAN. A PRINCE. THE SON OF A BARBARIAN KING.

THE PRINCE HAS FOUGHT WELL THIS NIGHT, AND ALTHOUGH HE IS BEATEN AND HIS COMRADES SLAIN, IT CAN SURELY BE SAID THAT NO MAN, SAVE CONAN, HIMSELF, HAS BRAVED GREATER ODDS AND LIVED.

TOMORROW, THE CAMPS OF THE HORDE WILL BE FILLED WITH THE TALE OF A YOUNG BARBARIAN WITH THE EYES OF A DEMON, AND THE SWORD-ARM OF A GOD!

TODAY A PRINCE LIES UNCONSCIOUS IN A MUD PUDDLE.

HE IS ALONE IN KHITAI...

HE MIGHT AS WELL BE A THOUSAND WORLDS AWAY.

IT IS MORNING.

YOU HAVE CAUSED ME MUCH GRIEF, YOU AQUILONIAN PIG! SINGLE-HANDEDLY YOU HAVE ROBBED ME OF MY CHANCE TO BUY MY WAY INTO THE YAGYU CLAN, THE HORDE!

CHENSU WAS MY TICKET OUT OF THIS REBEL DUNG HEAP. HIS WEALTH COULD HAVE BROUGHT ME MUCH POWER! YOU CAN BRING ME NOTHING!

I PITY YOU, BARBARIAN, STUCK IN KHITAI, UNACQUAINTED WITH OUR WAYS.

"WE ARE A COMPLICATED PEOPLE. LIFE FOR US IS NOT MERELY BLACK VERSUS WHITE. GOOD VERSUS EVIL."

"DO NOT EXPECT US TO CHANGE OUR WAYS. THEY ARE BOTH ANCIENT AND POWERFUL!"

"AT ANY RATE, I SHALL TAKE YOUR ARMOR AS PAYMENT FOR MY LOSSES. IT IS NOT MUCH, BUT IT WILL BUY SOME PROVISIONS FOR MY MEN."

PTUI

FAREWELL, BARBARIAN. I LEAVE YOU NOW--

--NAKED AND ALONE.

...To be Continued...

KING CONAN

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

PAT REDOING
EDITOR

Attention correspondents: if you don't want your full address printed, please be sure to tell us so!

Dear Editors,

I have found the last few issues of CONAN THE KING extremely interesting. Issue #49 was no exception. Don Kraar has a talent for crafting a tale. He will be missed, but I look forward to seeing how James Owsley weaves a story. I am sure Conan is in good hands.

Despite a superb quality of issue #49, I did find one thing disturbing. Conan acts like a complete stranger to the ways of Yezdigerd when this is simply not the case. Conan has met and dealt with Yezdigerd on many occasions in his adventure filled life. Indeed Yiz himself bears a scar on his face given to him by the Cimmerian.

Until a Smurf appears in this magazine, I intend to continue reading it faithfully. Aw, heck, this is so good that I could probably overlook the Smurf.

Jeff Diehl
Manchester, MO

Thanks, Jeff. You're right about King Conan and Yezdigerd. . .but characters do change, over the years.

Fellow Barbarians,

I recently purchased a copy of CONAN THE KING (#49), and I was impressed. Since I've been an avid fan of the other Conan mags for quite some time, I am well aware of the No-Prize rules and regulations. In issue #49, on page 9, it shows Hagan taking a severe blow to the forehead. On page 13 we see Hagan rising from the ground, with a bloodied head, yet on page 14 he is saving the Queen with a markless head. Now I'm sure this isn't a mistake, but merely a scene showing the toughness of the Northern Warrior. As he rose from the ground, he wiped the blood from his head. With the cold air helping out, the cut clotted quickly, then re-opened as Hagan delivered the fatal blow to the kidnapper. I know Marvel never makes mistakes and I think my explanation is in line for a No-Prize. What do you think?

Myles Green
Quesnel, B.C. Canada

Well, Myles, we never do make mistakes and we hope your No-Prize doesn't get stopped at the Canadian customs office. Congratulations—a well-earned No-Prize is in the mail to a true Conan follower.

Dear Don, Michael, Fraja, et al,

Years ago I picked up a SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN and have since collected every CONAN SAGA, one third of CONAN THE BARBARIAN, all the SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, and I've just recently completed my collection of CONAN THE KING. Thus, it is safe to say that I am an avid admirer and die-hard barbarian.

One of the most difficult transitions for me was trying to decide which I liked better—Conan the family man or Conan the rogue (this is a crisis that changes from issue to issue). But, I must say, I have easily fallen in love with the colorful characters in CONAN THE KING. The plot development and artistry is wonderful. Kudos to you all.

Now that I have lavished you with praise, I will come to a disconcerting question—why has Zenobia become such a wimp? The woman is milquetoast.

Granted, I understand the grief of losing her son and the post-partem that has been brought on by this, but this problem has been developing since the mid-twenties (I mean issues).

When she and Conan were first married, you could see the fire in her eyes, now the most she does is put her hands on her hips and scowl. No wonder Conan is never around—who would be with such a docile creature? Of the women in Conan's past, the ones he admired and loved the most were those strong-willed and full of spunk. I hate to see Conan's wife and queen lose that radiant quality.

The other characters in CONAN THE KING have such distinct personalities that they become living breathing entities in the mind of the reader. It is that quality that makes CONAN THE KING such a joy to read. Please give Zenobia back some of her old spunk and vibrance. She's Conan's partner as well as queen, she should have some quality that make her admirable and worthy of the Cimmerian's lineage.

Malandra Yandrell
Tucson, AZ

Malandra, what do you think of Zenobia now that Jim Owsley is handling her character? It's true, under Kraar's scripting, she wasn't much of a wildcat, but she *was* getting on in years.

Dear Marvel,

I am sorry to learn that Don Kraar is leaving CONAN THE KING. His stories have been enjoyable and quite readable. I thought that issue #49 was one of the best Conan stories I'd read in a long time.

I can't say that I am too happy about Jim Owsley taking over but we'll see what he has to say.

Patrick Guthrie
Fayetteville, AR

Dear Marvel,

By Crom! What's going on at Marvel these days? You are putting out some great comics. I thought CONAN THE KING #49 was a great issue.

I am sorry to see Don Kraar go but I eagerly await James Owsley's arrival. And Geof Isherwood is coming back too? *Conan lives!*

Sid Quabelle
(Address withheld by request)

BULLPEN BULLETINS

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"So maybe it's not as classy as a silver bullet! At least it got the job done."

SPEEDBALL (Speedball #7)

ITEM: Congratulations to dandy *Denny O'Neil*, former Marvel writer and editor, now writer and editor for our Distinguished Competitors up the street, on the occasion of his recent marriage to his childhood sweetheart, Magnificent *Mantran McFarland*. The captivating couple said their vows on August 19th in Florissant, Missouri, a stone's throw from their native St. Louis, but have since set up residence in the Comicbook Capital of the world, New York City. Best bat-wishes to the newlyweds from your batty Bullpen and Marvelites everywhere. (Incidentally, there's no truth to the rumor that Denny's role at the wedding was played by *Michael Keaton*.)

ITEM: Bad news, sports fans, the third game between Marvel's softball team, the magnificent Marvel Bullpenners, and the diabolical DC Bullets was cancelled. That leaves us tied at one game a piece, and chompin' at the bit waiting for next year.

ITEM: That last item shouldn't imply that your Bullpen buddies have been inactive this past summer. Au' contraire, between the Marvel Punishers shooting paintballs at any team that got in their way during our wild and wooly survival games and hanging out at *Ralph Macchio's* pool, we also found time to run in two of Manufacturer's Hanover Trust's Corporate Challenge races in Central Park. Our team was organized by *Bob Budiansky*, *Don Daley*, and *Laura Hitchcock*. Runners included *Lou Bank*, *Harry Candelario*, *Karen Corbo*, *Kelly Corvese*, *Stacey Datcher*, *James DeGiovanna*, *Harry Eisenstein*, *Danny Fingeroth*, *Dawn Geiger*, *Michael Heisler*, *Janet Jackson*, *Barry Kaplan*, *Ken Lopez*, *Jose Marzan*, *Janet Pezzuto*, *Rodney Ramos*, *Michael Rockwitz*, *Holly Randeau*, *Jim Salicrup*, *Evelyn Stein*, and *Sara Tuchinsky*. Believe it or not, we all finished the three and a half mile races with flying colors. Our faces were red and we were all out of breath, but by golly, our colors were flying.

ITEM: Speaking of physical fitness, we thought it might be interesting to mention how some folks in the comic book biz manage to stay in shape. After all, writing and drawing comics isn't the most physically demanding job in the world, so a lot of us are constantly battling against the bulge. *Stan* (the Man) *Lee* was famous for writing most of his classic comics scripts while standing by his pool, changing his position only to follow the sun for the best possible tan. Stan called it his way of avoiding "Writer's Belly." We hear Stan is currently organizing fast-paced lunchtime walks at our west coast animation studio. Big *John Buscema*, as well as many other Bullpenners, works out with weights. Both *John* and *Virginia Romita*, as well as Ridiculous *Ralph Macchio* and Grinning *Glenn Herdling* are terrors on the tennis courts. Adorable *Ann Nocenti* is taking a judo class while Hard-hittin' *Howard Mackie* has been known to practice tai' chi. And we hear *John Byrne's* been logging those miles on his stationary bike. We could go on and on, but it suddenly occurred to us that we could put together a "How To Stay Fit The Marvel Way" video tape and make a fortune. Jane Fonda, look out!

ITEM: Whew! All that talk about exercise has gotten us hungry, which reminds us that Thanksgiving is right around the corner. So we'll just wish you all a happy Turkey Day as we try not to pig out as we watch the big Spider-Man balloon in the Macy's Parade on TV.

PRO FILE: Glenn Herdling

Assistant Editor on: All those SPIDER-MAN titles, et al.

Marvel freelance credits (past): Various MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE articles, a story in WHAT THE—?! featuring Spider-Ham, and stimulating SPIDER-MAN letter columns.

Marvel freelance credits (present): More MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE articles, some future plans for MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS, a Rick Jones SOLO AVENGERS story, a back-up story for the New Universe titles, and a future SPIDER-MAN fill-in.

My hobbies are: Skiing, tennis, Nautilus, Skirmish, bar-hopping, beach-combing, and Jackie.

The single work of which I am most proud is: An article for MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE which did not contain a single exclamation point!!!!

My pet peeves are: People with pet peeves.

My place of birth is: Actually, my place of conception might be more interesting.

My greatest accomplishment outside the comics field is: Graduating from college while still retaining a few brain cells.

My oddest habit is: Playing your favorite pop tunes with rude noises emanating from my compressed hands.

If they were making a movie of my life, I'd like to see my part played by: Patrick Swayze, of course, it would be a highly fictionalized account.

The reason I got into comics was: To make my friends envious.

People who knew me in High School thought I was: Someone else.

My favorite performers are: Robin Williams, Adam Blaustein, Harrison Ford, Goldie Hawn, Laurie Anderson, the Larks, and U2.

The last good book I read was: *Samadhi: Self Development in Zen, Swordsmanship and Psychotherapy* by Mike Sayama.

The last good movie I saw was: *Street Trash*.

The biggest influences on my work include: Editing: Tom DeFalco, Mark Gruenwald, Carl Potts, and Jim Salicrup.
Writing: J.R.R. Tolkien, Stephen Donaldson, John Gardner, and the obligatory Stan Lee.

My greatest unfulfilled ambition in the comics field is: To change the general public's opinion of comics so that people won't be ashamed to read them on the subway.

The worst part of my job is: Filling out this thing.

When nobody's looking I like to: Make fun of Jim Salicrup.

The one thing I really want the world to know about me is: I am *not* a Yuppie.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ DAREDEVIL #264
- ☐ SEMPER FI #4
- ☐ WEST COAST AVENGERS #42 – John Byrne debuts as the writer and penciler!
- ☐ WOLFPACK Limited Series #8
- ☐ G.I. JOE SPECIAL MISSIONS #19
- ☐ WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #48
- ☐ MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #14
- ☐ CONAN THE KING #51
- ☐ EXCALIBUR #6
- ☐ STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI #27
- ☐ TALES OF G.I. JOE #15
- ☐ G.I. JOE EUROPEAN MISSIONS #6
- ☐ STRAY TOASTER'S Limited Series #3
- ☐ CAPTAIN AMERICA #351
- ☐ SOLO AVENGERS #16
- ☐ THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #313
- ☐ GROO THE WANDERER #49
- ☐ ALPHA FLIGHT #68
- ☐ THE NEW MUTANTS #73
- ☐ POWERLINE #5
- ☐ POWER PACK #44
- ☐ WOLVERINE #5
- ☐ HAVOK AND WOLVERINE: MELTDOWN Limited Series #1
- ☐ MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #72
- ☐ THE INCREDIBLE HULK #353
- ☐ MARVEL TALES #221
- ☐ THE AVENGERS #301
- ☐ CONAN THE BARBARIAN #216
- ☐ G.I. JOE #64
- ☐ THE PUNISHER #17
- ☐ SILVER SURFER #21
- ☐ MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #15
- ☐ THE SUB-MARINER Limited Series #5
- ☐ THE PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #4
- ☐ THE UNCANNY X-MEN #242
- ☐ DRAGON'S CLAWS #6
- ☐ THE LIGHT AND DARKNESS WAR #4
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #324
- ☐ SPEEDBALL #7
- ☐ THOR #401
- ☐ TRANSFORMERS #50
- ☐ X-FACTOR #38
- ☐ CONAN SAGA #22
- ☐ AKIRA #6
- ☐ IRON MAN #240
- ☐ THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #148
- ☐ CLASSIC X-MEN #31
- ☐ MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #16
- ☐ DOCTOR STRANGE #3
- ☐ THE 'NAM #28

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ THE 'NAM MAGAZINE #8
- ☐ THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #157

MARVEL BOOKSHELF

- ☐ MARVEL MASTERWORKS Vol. 1: SPIDER-MAN
- ☐ MARVEL MASTERWORKS Vol. 7: THE X-MEN
- ☐ MARVEL MASTERWORKS Vol. 3: THE X-MEN
- ☐ THE DREAMWEAVER Graphic Novel
- ☐ THE SILVER SURFER Graphic Novel - Stan Lee & Moebius